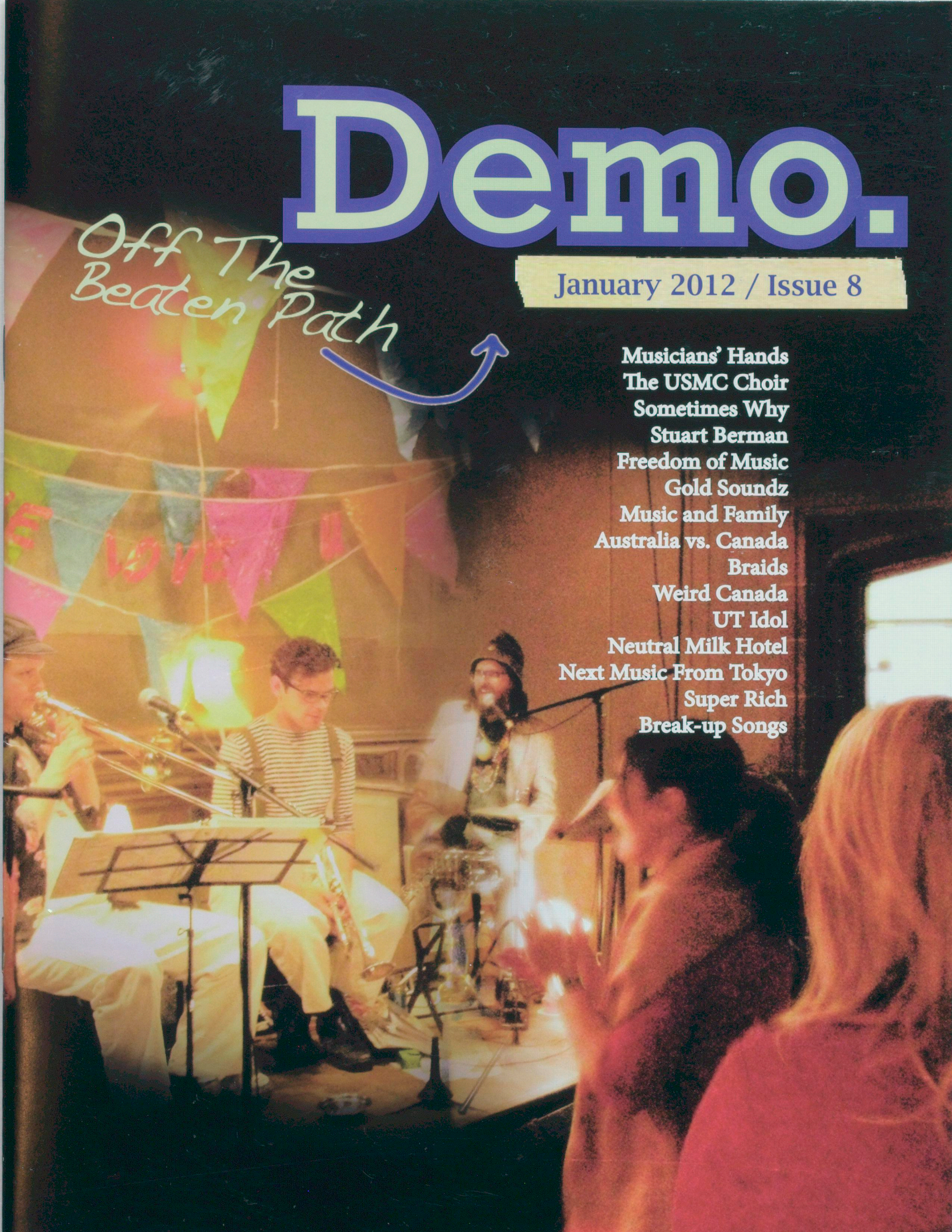

Demo.

January 2012 / Issue 8

Off The Beaten Path

Musicians' Hands
The USMC Choir
Sometimes Why
Stuart Berman
Freedom of Music
Gold Soundz
Music and Family
Australia vs. Canada
Braids
Weird Canada
UT Idol
Neutral Milk Hotel
Next Music From Tokyo
Super Rich
Break-up Songs

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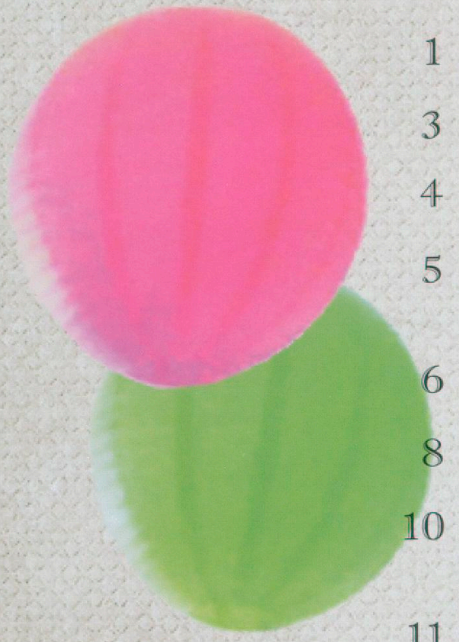

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Dear Readers,

With this issue we want to celebrate Toronto's diverse musical landscape from the varied perspectives of students here at the University of Toronto. Our writers set out to explore Toronto "Off the Beaten Path" in the hopes to illuminate those creative corners that are overshadowed by the likes of Drake and Justin Bieber.

We sometimes forget that there once was a time when finding out about new bands required more than typing some key words into Google. In this issue, you may read an opinion piece on Weird Canada to find out why the age of the Blogosphere is golden for (Canadian) music. You also be interested in reading a discussion between one of our writers and Gold Soundz regarding the problems with putting on all-ages shows. In our feature interview, U of T alumnus Stuart Berman recalls his career path as an editor from *The Varsity* to *The Grid* and gives some advice on art of music journalism.

In the spirit of multiculturalism in a city as diverse as Toronto, a look across the ocean is inevitable: Australia's music scene has to stand the test against ours in a comparative opinion piece by an Australian native and the New Music from Tokyo showcase reveals unexpected gems to its reviewer. Even within the campus bubble music is all around. In this issue we are spotlighting the St. Michael's Liturgical Choir that has more in its repertoire than just church songs and our review of Hart House's newly launched UT Idol describes as the contestants go up against one another.

So put on your current favourite band (for suggestions, check out our playlist) and enjoy this issue – we sure did in bringing it to you!

Your editors,

Shauna and Assunta

Demo.

January 2012 | Issue 8

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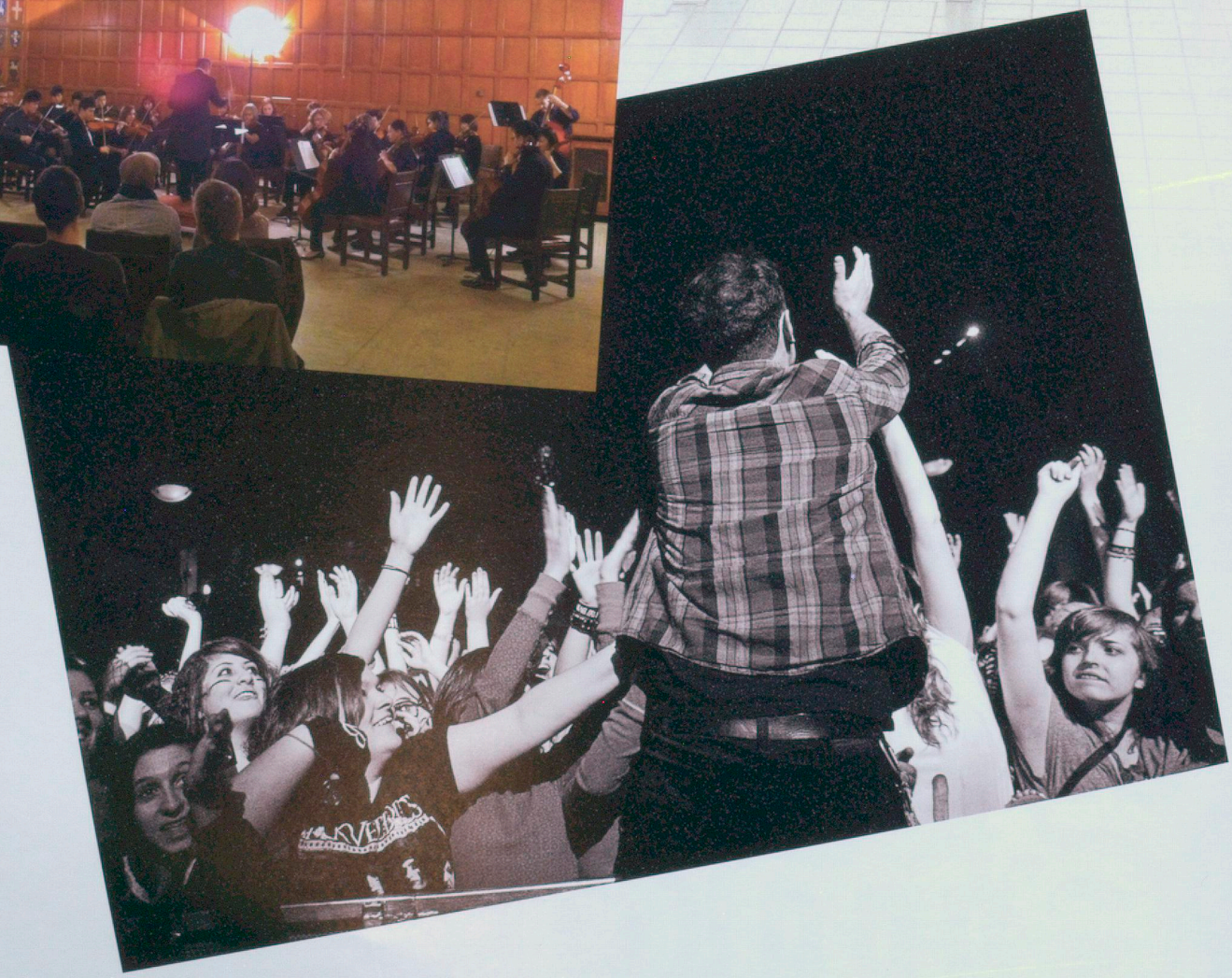


In the House - Message from the Hart House Staff Advisor

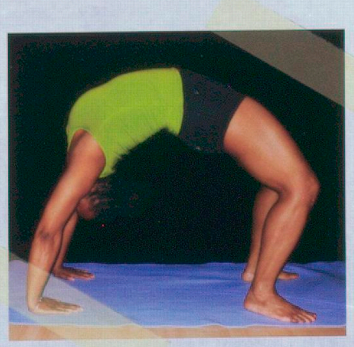
It's been an incredibly busy kick off to the Fall season; orientation, $5 buck lunches, welcoming back club and committee members and tons of programming activities have shaped the last few months. This year's programming for both the House in general and for the Music Committee consists of some old favourites and some new initiatives. The Music Committee is going through a transition year with many students putting in their last efforts before graduating and heading off to exciting life adventures.

Hart House continues to change and grow and support the needs of students and all its members with innovative programmes, activities and experiences in keeping with our vision. We are squarely focused on bringing our vision to action and creating opportunities for "awakening the capacity for self knowledge and self expression." Massage Mondays continue to be a big hit; we've even added an extra massage therapist and still find the sign up sheets full week after week. This is a great way to take a few minutes break and de-stress with a free 15 minute shiatsu massage. Who doesn't love our $5 buck lunches? If the long line ups are any indication, these Hart-y lunches are hitting the mark when it comes to both healthy food and a great price! In the music domain, we have had an excellent season of Jazz at Oscars with a wide cross section of jazz interpretations including Jorge Miguel's flamenco inspired offerings complete with a Flamenco dancer to the dulcet tones of Fernanda Cunha straight from Brazil and outstanding performances by our own U of T groups. For anyone who has caught the whimsical and wacky show Henri's Heligoland Follies on the first Thursday of each month can attest to its comedic nature and huge entertainment capital. Scores of artists take part in this highly stylized cabaret show: video, music, theatre and improv all collide to form an often magical evening.

For those of you who think you can sing we've introduced UT Idol, our take on a friendly singing competition. It's been wildly successful in no small part to our judges, the host as well as the eclectic performances of Dave Clarke and his Woodshed Orchestra. Dave is an unforgettable character who can back singers with the latest urban music or throw down some classic Dixie land jazz and inspire spontaneous audience participation all in the same night. Farhan Husain and Sean Mitchell are our resident music committee coordinators and are steering Idol into a fantastic first season. CIUT is offering the winner 8 hours of studio time with an engineer and a finished demo so participants really have an impressive incentive to win other than bragging rights!

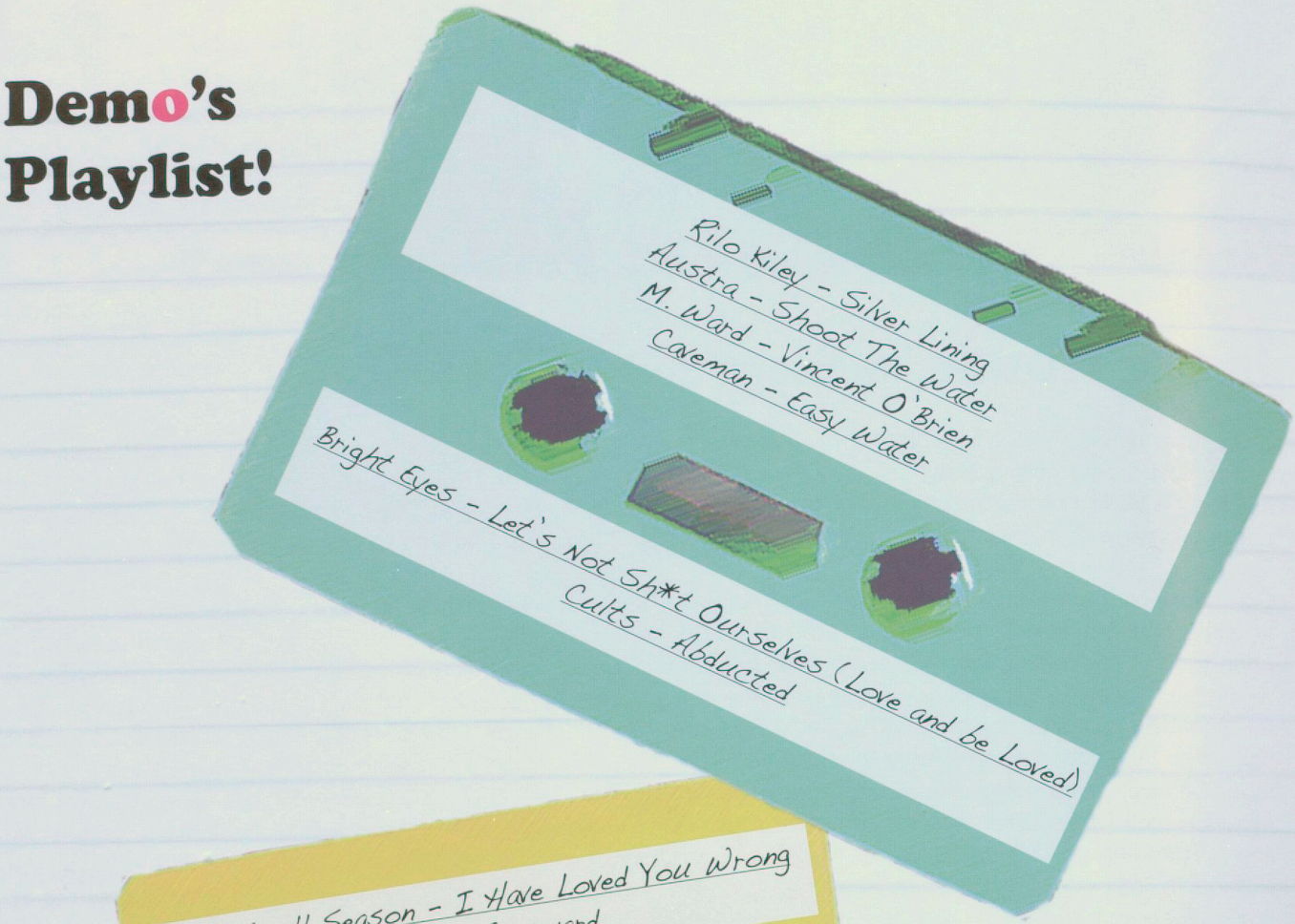
Big thanks to Shauna Keddy and Assunta Alegiani, our co editors in chief for pulling this issue together in the midst of midterms and well into their final year of study.

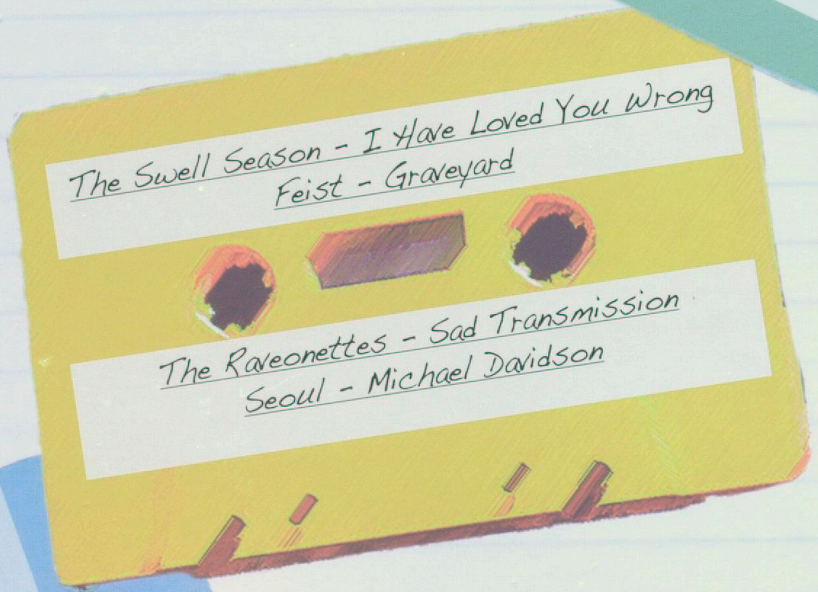
All in all it's been a wonderful ride so far, seeing the Sunday Concert crowds support U of T alumna Erica Iris Huang tickle the ivories at her October concert, students and grads perform free lunch hour concerts and other Hart House musical happenings. From our House to yours, our unofficial mandate stands tall, 'who you are is welcome, who you are becoming is why we're here'.

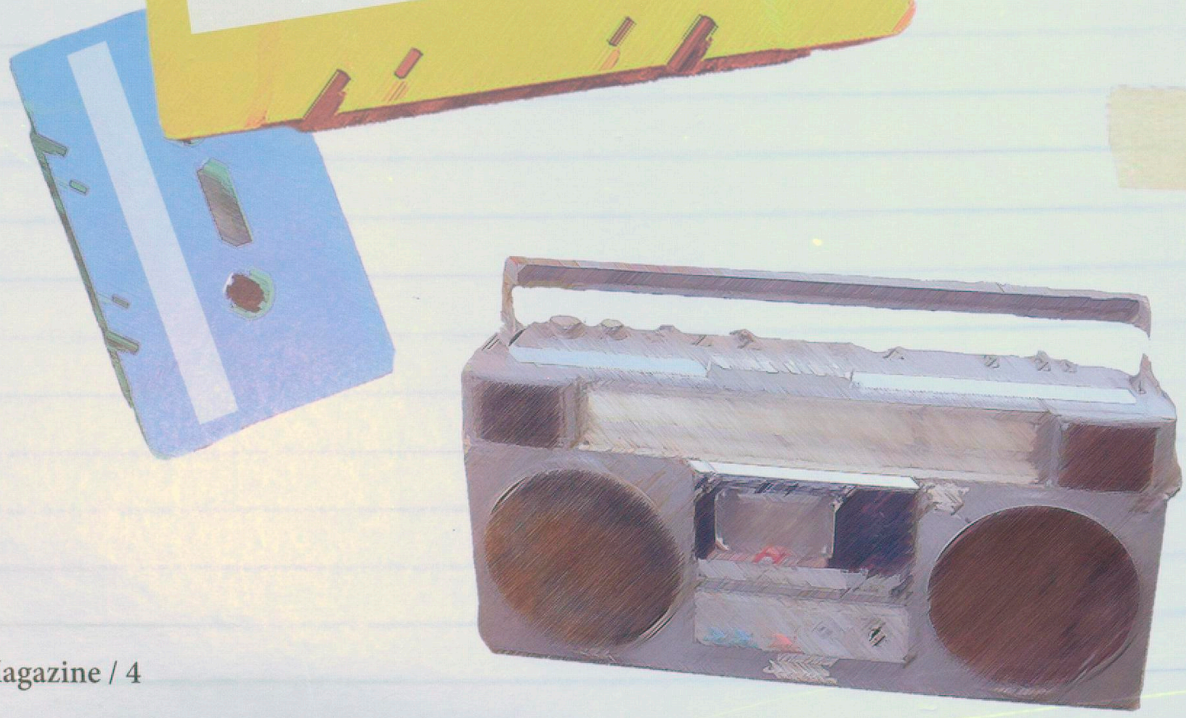


Zoe Dille B. A., M. Ed.
Programme Coordinator, Innovation
Staff Advisor to the Music Committee

Demo's Playlist!

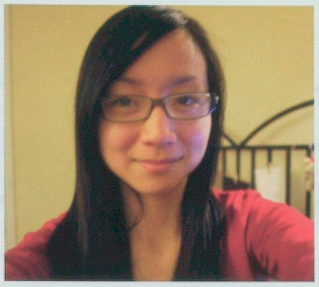

Rilo Kiley - Silver Lining
Austra - Shoot The Water
M. Ward - Vincent O'Brien
Caveman - Easy Water
Bright Eyes - Let's Not Sh*t Ourselves (Love and be Loved)
Cults - Abducted





Interview with Anna Lubinsky, The Director of USMC Liturgical Choir

Monica Chao



Monica Chao is a first year Medical Radiation Science student who listens to Katy Perry in the darkroom.

Every Friday evening, the University of St. Michael's College Liturgical Choir (USMC) meets to practice. With roughly ten members, it is a close-knit group that keeps busy singing at various events. They perform at Kelly's Corner every last Wednesday of the month, provide music for St. Mike's student mass on Saturdays and sing at Alumni functions. Member Carren says "It's a fun, comfortable place to enjoy music". Anna Lubisnky, the choir's director, admits that the laisser-faire policy on practice attendance can be a bit of a struggle: "We welcome anyone to join us at anytime, so we're sort of lax on attendance; people come and go. We don't want to implement rules, like if you miss three practices then you're out. But we do hope people can attend regularly so we can make progress at each rehearsal". USMC is also hoping to get the word out about their choir.

Once Christmas is around the corner, the choir lifts spirits around St. Michael's College with their caroling. Lubinsky remembers one of her personal highlights: "We do that around exam time in December and some people even sing along with us!" For the future, the choir plans to perform more often at Kelly's Corner and sing at more Alumni events. Lubinsky is in her fourth year, studying Linguistics, Music History and Culture, and Christianity and Culture. She explains that people generally think the choir only does church songs, but they are working on other, non-church music this year. When asked why she choose to take on the task of choir director, she replies: "I love music and this is a way for me to establish connections with other people musically and it's also a good way to relieve stress from school".

Website http://www.usmclc.com/
E-mail choir@usmclc.com

Photography by Monica Chao

Gotta Ask, Sometimes Why?

Shelby Challis

Can you name a band that has been making music for the past 13 years, that has five albums under their belt and sounds like a mix of The Police, Jawbox and Supertramp? Well, that would be the band Sometimes Why. When I sat down with this Toronto-based indie rock trio - Jason Thomson on drums and lead vocals, John Pogue on lead guitar and Jason Epp on bass and keyboards – we talked about how one goes about keeping a band recording, touring and continually evolving their sound for over a decade.

Their story, while the band officially formed in 1998, really dates back a few years earlier than that, to a little place called Markham High School. Jason Thomson recollects: "It's kind of funny because what it has ultimately become is a high school band making a good thing of it." Without knowing it at the time, all of the band's current members, including their former bass player Steve Perry, attended the same high school. Talk about the six degrees of separation!

After graduation, the member's path diverged for a bit with Thomson's departure to Vancouver where he fronted a series of his own metal bands. Thomson looks back at this period with a laugh and says "in those days, everyone was in a band in Vancouver!" However, in '98 through a mutual friend, Thomson and John Pogue reconnected. Pogue recounts the encounter as a bit of a shocker, "I didn't even realize who Jay was because he was a grown man when I saw him again! I thought he was older than me!" Not long after, accompanied by Perry, they began jamming with another Toronto born band, Change of Heart, in the Spadina House Basement. For the first four albums the trio stayed intact, playing local gigs in Toronto at venues like the El Mocambo, the Bovine and the Horseshoe and touring across the United States.

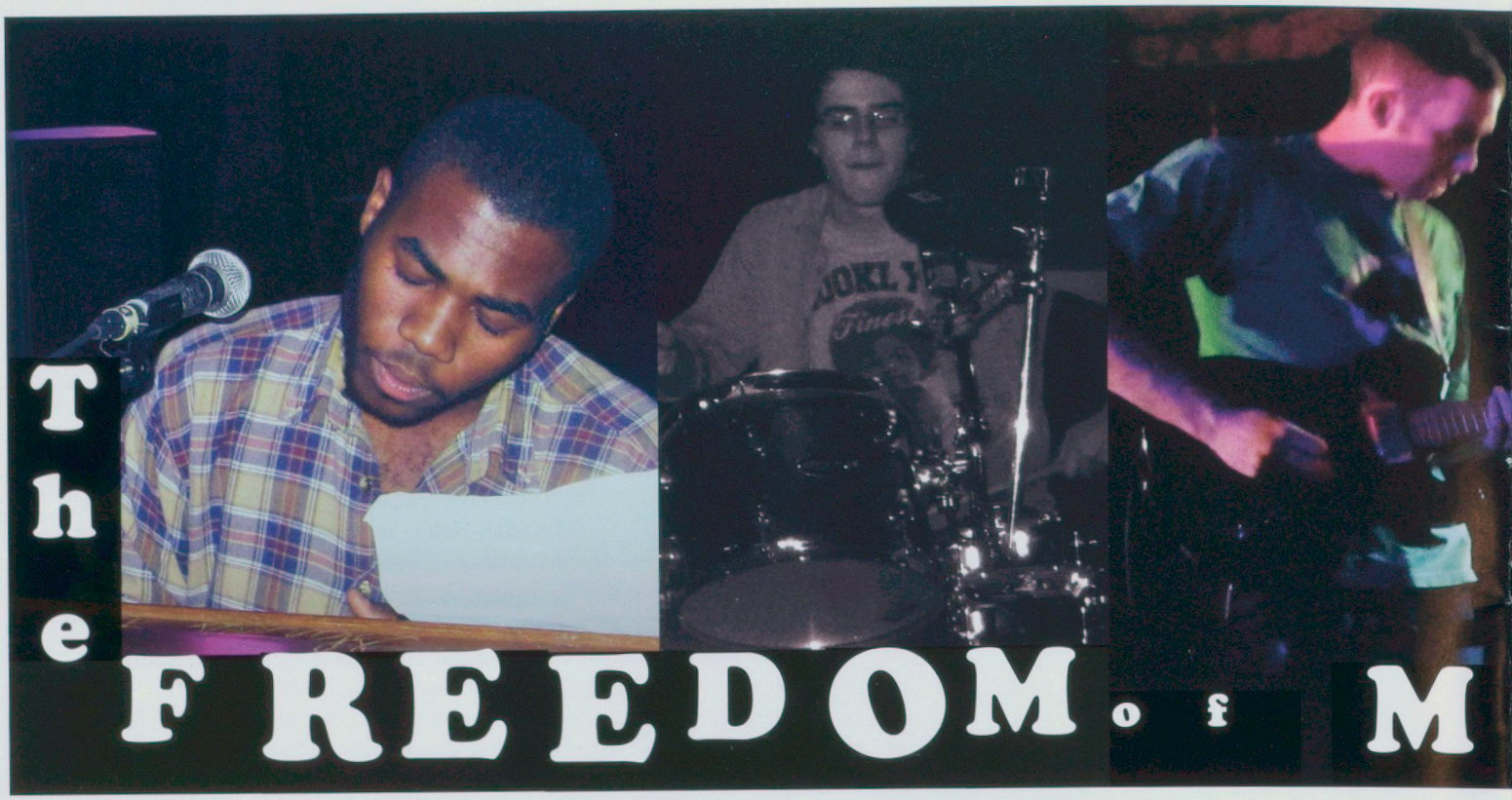
Shelby Challis is currently enrolled in her 4th year of undergraduate studies. A self proclaimed political junkie, she feels she sits right at home in the Department of Political Science.

Their 5th studio album, It Starts With A Secret, was recorded last summer with Allen Epley and Eric Abert from the Life and Times. While they did hit a speed bump when one of their bass players had to quit before the album's release, their first single Beaumont hit the radio waves in January, followed by Heavy Weather in May. Their second release accompanied a music video, which the band shot at Thomson's cottage, located right on Georgian Bay. "It had rained all morning. By the time we were ready to shoot it was just overcast and with the sun setting in the background it turned out beautifully. The scenery ended up being the fourth character in the video." The band currently works on getting gigs lined up to tour the album and showcasing the talent of their newest member, Jayson Epp.

When asked about who they considered their most influential artists, they list bands such as The Police, The Beatles, Shiner and No Means No. I could not then help but notice the versatility of their selection and asked how these influences show in their music. Thomson replies: "I think that listening to the record and the previous records it is safe to say it's very much a loud rock band kind of thing, but especially on this record (*It Starts with a Secret*) we really managed to unearth those little subtle things. Certain lyrics may strike the audience as sounding like one of these artists and it's neat that we don't shy away from those touches or influences." Thomson describes their dynamic as: "forceful, considering it is just a three piece and it's quite tense and dramatic in a lot of ways." To which Pogue added: "we also introduced keyboards on this album as well which just sort of came about as we were messing around in the studio." In terms of lyrics, Thompson, who is primarily the lyricist, explains that he likes to bring up ideas that deal with issues of self awareness and perception, in that he "like[s] to skew things up a bit, things that at first might seem completely apparent. Once you alter your perception it can become something entirely different."

The band finances itself, which they say frees them from any external influences. I asked in what way this independence played out, as opposed to someone else calling the shots. "Well, what you tend to hear on average now is someone else's idea who is, more often than not, not involved with the band. It is this intermediary who is determining what is successful", Thomson replies and Epp adds that "it's a more honest way to go, it allows you to invest in and believe in what you're doing and hopefully it will all come back around in the end."

At the end of our interview I asked what it is that has been keeping the band recording and performing throughout the years. This was met with the unanimous response that they are musicians at heart and, as Pogue put it, "at this point, 13 years in, why stop now?"



The FREEDOM of M

The best music is filling — it satiates a person far more than temporary pleasures by leaving something behind that resonates. Of course, we all have our own opinions of what the "best music" is and even then, our own tastes are constantly evolving. But whatever one's taste, it is clear that we identify with music because it is an extension of ourselves, our emotions, our sensations.

Music is a kind of freedom. It is ever changing and adapting, and all we can do as listeners or players is to follow or define its movements. In the words of the band Slaves to the Groove, music is all about "maintaining the Groove". This band is unique in that their music lives by this philosophy. They strive to move with the natural order of things — the Groove — and let their music evolve with the changes around them. Such a philosophy is absent from a lot of popular music today and instead the production of music is often treated as a business, rather than an art. For this reason, underage bands — and 19+ bands — have faced particular difficulties when dealing with the urban music scene. It can become a matter of trying to preserve the essential reasons for playing music in the first place.

Newly nineteen, Slaves to the Groove consists of U of T first year Mark Dalgarno on guitar, Khaleel Seivwright on organ and lead vocals, and Curtis Clark on drums. They started as a band about three years ago when Mark and Khaleel first played a show together at Siesta Nouveaux. Since then they have experienced constant change, playing with several different drummers and at one point going only with guitar and organ. This was, as they put it, "the sketchy period". Only last March did they establish Curtis as a drummer and from that point on they began to develop the philosophy that so defines them. Despite their young age, they've had their fair share of dealing with the Toronto music scene, promoters, and well known venues such as El Mocambo and Rancho Relaxo.

u s i c

Evangeline Fitz

To get straight to the point, these guys have been playing 19+ shows since long before they turned nineteen. The fact of the matter is, most of the time, venues do not ask the age of the band members. So what problem do underage bands have to deal with? It seems to me it is not so much of an issue for the younger bands as for their fans. While venues may not card the band, you can be sure they will be asking for those ids (fake or not) at the door or the bar. As a recent article in NOW magazine points out, the lack of underage shows is due to the fact that venues make a large portion of their money through bar sales at 19+ shows. And so here lies the problem: venues do not host all ages shows because no money can be made through the bar. Underage bands can play 19+ shows but they cannot expect their fans to show up for them. Ticket sales then have to cover all the costs; including the possibility of working with promoters. We must face the facts — the Western world is driven by the economy, and it works its way into all aspects of daily life, including the arts. So where is the freedom of music? How can we find and maintain the Groove?

I may not have all the answers but one thing is for certain after my interview with Slaves to the Groove: house parties are essential. For a band of any age, playing house parties offers many things venues never can. The band is free to play what they want, with no need for obligatory crowd-pleaser covers. The energy is higher. Most importantly, there is no cover charge. "We've never received a dollar for our music," guitarist Mark Dalgarno says, and it becomes evident that demanding money for their music goes against everything related to the Groove.

So, underage bands, there is no need to despair. Even aside from house parties there are still plenty of ways to get yourself out there, free from the stress of bar and ticket sales. There are so many small places that will take on bands just for the sake of it, especially in areas outside the downtown core. Play whenever, wherever. "Go out and try, whatever you think will work," says organist Khaleel Seivwright in advice to younger bands.

Alas, in this fast-paced world of media, computers and corporations it is easy to find ourselves forgetting the true purpose of music. As Mark Dalgarno puts it, "There are obstacles to get to the Groove, such as technological distractions". Slaves to the Groove really seem to understand what the art of playing and listening and feeling music is all about. If you ever see them live, it is clear in the way they play. Half the time, all three of them have their eyes closed as their hands dart like mad birds over strings or keys or drums. You can feel and see that they have reached the Groove. For music is not about age or money or what venues you can play at. It is a transcendent power. It is human expression. It is an art that makes the best and worst of us a slave to the Groove.

Evangeline Fitz is an English major in her first year and is the guitarist for the band Nikki Fierce.

The **Weirder**, the Better:
A Celebration of Weird Canada

Elena Gritzan

Weird Canada is the best thing to have happened to Canadian music. If you have never heard of this blog and wonder how it could be an essential contributor to our musical culture, that is exactly the point of it: coverage and support of the unknown.

Started by Aaron Levin in May of 2009, Weird Canada is a website devoted to discovery and diversity. Its stated mission is "to highlight the emerging and boundary-pushing musical adventures taking place in Canada, with a focus on regional peculiarities". This translates into almost daily features on obscure bands from anywhere in the country. This is what sets Weird Canada apart from the thousands of music blogs out there--dedication to uncovering and supporting hidden gems of talent.

I am pretty into Canadian music: I listen to CBC Radio 3 religiously and am no stranger to Toronto's concert scene. Yet I can still count on Weird Canada to introduce me to bands I have never heard of before, genres I have never considered listening to, and music scenes of cities I have never been to. Listening to random tracks on the front page can be a hit and miss exercise. Sometimes what you hear will offend you, surprise you, or make you wonder if it is even music. But you will inevitably find at least one band that just clicks. They will not sound like the top 40 artists you hear on the radio, not even like the indie darlings praised by Pitchfork or the CBC. What they will be is special, and acquired tastes often have a way of becoming favourites.

All an album needs to be featured on the site is to have been released in a physical format by a Canadian artist. This emphasis on music as a physical entity reveals the site's goal to promote music as something to be treasured--this is mirrored in their approach to reviews. A post on Weird Canada is not a critique; it is the enthusiastic sharing of a musical discovery from one music fan to another. What is the point of spending time talking about music that you do not like? Use that time instead to discover your future favourite band.

In its two years of existence, Weird Canada has grown past its humble beginnings as a small music blog. It hosts its own festival (Wyrd Fest features two stages and a continuous flow of music from a wide variety of bands), releases exclusive seven inch records, and was recognized by the CBC as the "Best Music Website in Canada" through their Searchlight 2011 contest.

You have probably been taking the music around you for granted. The best music you have ever heard could be right in your backyard, whether you live in Toronto or a small town. So take some inspiration from Weird Canada and take a risk, give an artist you have never heard of a try, go see a show in the bar down the street, and listen to everything you can get your hands on.

Elena Gritzan is a second year in Chemistry and Psychology. She spends an inordinate amount of time following Canadian indie music. To her, the ideal album would combine folk, electronica and classical orchestra.

AN INTERVIEW WITH STUART BERMAN

FAN WU

Stuart Berman, online editor of *The Grid*, regular contributor for *Pitchfork*, author of *This Book Is Broken*, and proud U of T alumnus sits down with *Demo*'s Fan Wu to talk about music journalism, Canada's musical landscape and the future of Sonic Youth.

Demo: You are the online editor of *The Grid*, and have done a lot of critical writing for both its former incarnate *Eye Weekly* and *Pitchfork*. How have your academic or extracurricular experiences at U of T informed your career path today?

Stuart Berman: The academic influence was an indirect one. I actually majored in Commerce at U of T, so I have a Bachelors of Commerce degree, which doesn't really factor into my life at all. But because I was studying business, I needed a creative outlet at U of T and decided to answer a call for writers for The Varsity. In my second year I started out just reviewing records, having no real background in writing or journalism; at that point I was emulating my favourite writers. I became Associate Arts Editor for two years and, after I graduated, became the Arts Editor. The Varsity was a good halfway house between university and working life and provided for me a very, *very* small salary (*laughs*). It was the first time I really thought, "I could make a career out of this!".

D: How does the music critic in you interact with your musicianship in your band The Two Koreas?

SB: Well, I'm not actually a musician; I'm the singer in the band because I don't have any musical talent. That's the great irony in a band, the person who doesn't know how to play an instrument gets to be the frontman. In the band we have a couple of writers, Kieran Grant and Jason Anderson, both of whom have also worked at Eye Weekly. Naturally, we spend a lot of time thinking about music and culture and that is reflected in our song writing; our music is cheeky and ironic and I think that's probably an extension of what we do for a living

D: You are immersed in the Canadian music scene and wrote a book, *This Book is Broken*, on the history of the popular Canadian band Broken Social Scene. Do you think we have finally formed a Canadian musical identity in the past decade?

SB: I don't think there's an actual sonic identity. You have a lot of bands that do a lot of different things but they don't necessarily come from the same sensibility. In the 90s, there weren't a lot of outlets for independent music and the music you would hear on MTV would all be filtered through mainstream music labels. There was no way for independent musicians to move their careers forward while staying an independent artist. They had to decide whether to sign with a major label or give up because of the [high] costs of touring the U.S., [trying to reach] people who [otherwise] had no access to your music. There was a lot of Canadian music in the 80s and 90s that was a knock-off of American music, like Our Lady Peace or The Tea Party; bands that haven't really stood the test of time.

But now you have a generation of bands who came of age during the Indie renaissance who have models to look up to, bands who follow their own vision, like Godspeed You! Black Emperor, who became very popular. Seeing a band like that succeed without any compromises is very inspirational to a new band trying to do their own thing. There are ways to get your music heard without conforming to traditional industry demands. Musically, there's not a lot of similarity between bands like Braids or Fucked Up, but they're both pursuing their own vision outside the major label industry. With resources like the internet and even CBC Radio 3, which didn't exist fifteen years ago, independent music can have a much larger audience.

"THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN MAINSTREA
LINE BETWEEN WHAT'S COOL AND UNCOO

D: How do you feel about Pitchfork as a tastemaker? What do you say to accusations of Pitchfork being a "hipster monolith" for taste and style in Toronto?

SB: I would hesitate to use the word monolithic for the site because it's evolved so much over the years, with different editors and writers and bands. It's too simplistic to say that it's uncompromising, that it doesn't adapt or react to new trends in the culture. It's funny that people call it a hipster magazine and associate it with the archetype of the young 20-something kid; most of the staff of Pitchfork are in their mid-30s and have been writing for around a decade. I think Pitchfork has done the best job in documenting the shifts in musical culture over the last ten years. Different eras are defined by different publications, like Rolling Stone in the 60's, NME in the 80's. In this post-millennial era, where genres are being blurred and the boundary between mainstream and indie is less defined and the line between what's cool and uncool is very nebulous and subjective, I think Pitchfork's really done a great job of covering the entire spectrum of popular music, whether it's dubstep or indie rock or nu-metal.

D: Could you give an example of the way Pitchfork has shifted in its taste and choice of coverage?

SB: There's a contingent of Pitchfork writers who have been accused of turning their back on late-90s/early-00s indie rock. But the truth is some bands just aren't of the same quality as they were ten years ago. You can see Pitchfork's support clearly in their reviews of Arcade Fire, Broken Social Scene or Radiohead, but we are not the marketing team for any band. Pitchfork ultimately is a website that judges the quality of the music and whether or not a band has lived up to the standards of its best work.

D: How did the news that Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore [of Sonic Youth] broke up affect you?

SB: I can't really say I'm devastated, not having known them personally. You have to put things into perspective: famine and war are devastating. A beloved musical couple breaking up is just sad news. Sonic Youth were a huge part of my upbringing and certainly a major part of the soundtrack to my university years, I associate much of my U of T time with Sonic Youth. It's interesting that they're breaking up so long into their relationship. I feel like marriages fall apart within the first two years or they last forever, so it's kind of strange timing. But they've been together a long time and it's hard to be the same person to the same people for a long period of time, people change over the years. And that's sort of the great gamble of marriage — [and I say this as a married person myself] whether the couple will grow alongside one another and have a complementary relationship. Maybe Moore and Gordon are evolving in different ways right now. I don't necessarily think this is the end of the band. There's a history of bands sticking together despite romantic relationships falling apart, so I wouldn't count Sonic Youth out.

D: They might go the way of the Cocteau Twins…

SB: Yeah, or Fleetwood Mac, or Metric… both survived the end of a relationship. Who knows, they might just get separate tour buses.

M AND INDIE IS LESS DEFINED AND THE L IS VERY NEBULOUS AND SUBJECTIVE."

D: What do you think of the state of music journalism these days, especially with new media giving anyone the opportunity to voice their opinion publicly?

SB: As in any other era of journalism, there are great writers and not-so-great writers, it's just that the internet has made the latter group a lot more visible. And while writers of my generation were lucky enough to have our earlier, more embarrassing efforts confined to the campus newspaper dustbin, today we have a lot of people taking their first cracks at journalism in a much more accessible forum, so there's a lot of growing-in-public going on and everything is now preserved for posterity. But just as it's possible to discover great music amid the glut of mediocre new bands the internet coughs up every day, it's just as possible to sift through all the blogs and start-up music sites to find great writers whose opinions you can trust: and Twitter makes it a lot easier to keep up on their latest work. Back in my day, you had to schlep to the newsstand and drop $50 for a stack of magazines! I also highly recommend The Daily Swarm as an excellent aggregator of the most interesting, intelligent, and hilarious music writing out there.

D: Many *Demo* writers have a passion for music writing. Do you have any advice for them in terms of doing it successfully and being able to secure a career in music editorial writing?

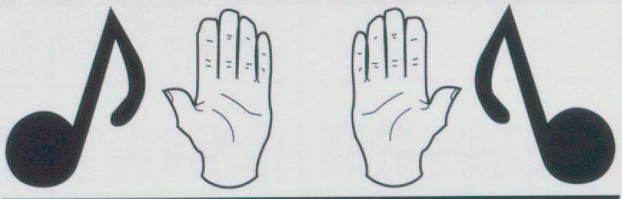
SB: Like anything, you should do your homework - that includes not only listening to a lot of music across different genres and from different eras but also reading up on a lot of music criticism and pop culture history. Because music is the product of a lot of things that exist outside of music: politics, fashion, economics, etc. I think a big part of a critic's job is positioning a piece of work in its proper context, and assess why or why it doesn't work in light of what's come before and what else is happening in the contemporary culture. For example, a budding critic would probably think twice about declaring Florence Welch to be the most daring, original pop singer of our day after hearing Kate Bush, or even Zola Jesus. As for securing a career, that's the really hard part. Writing about music is only a part of what I do for a living, my actual job is as an editor, assigning and editing stories for The Grid's website. The days of daily newspapers hiring full-time pop critics are sadly coming to an end. My advice would be to pursue a career that complements music writing - either as an editor at a magazine or website that has a music section, or with a steady, part-time job in the arts and culture sector that would also allow you to pursue music writing as a sideline freelance gig. You'll need to have a flexible schedule - interviews with musicians never happen on time.

D: To turn the interview on a hypothetical: who would you most like to sit down and have coffee with out of all the musicians you hold dear, dead or alive?

SB: I just watched Scorsese's George Harrison documentary, and he seems like he would've been a cool hang—I've always appreciated his dry sense of humour. But seeing as that scenario is impossible, I'll settle for a steak dinner with Nick Cave.

D: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak to *Demo*!

Fan Wu is a second year specializing in Literary Studies and minoring in English.
I'll see you in the sky above / in the tall grass, in the ones I love. / You're going to make me lonesome when you go.



Auguste Rodin, the famous scultor, created a set of modeled and casted plaster hands to represent their expressiveness. The hands he displayed in his work are varied — some are pairs of two different people holding hands, while some are musicians' hands, such as a pianist's. A musician's hands are possibly the most valuable tools they have to create their art. Over time, just like a brick layer, their hands begin to show the wear and tear they have gone through to perfect their craft. Every musician's hands are different based on the instruments they play and how they play them; string players may have calluses, pianists may have knobby fingers. Demo Photographer Emily Scherzinger took a look at a few U of T students' most valuable tools in expressing their art: the hands of musicians here on campus. In this modern age, Scherzinger was able to gather a snapshot of the expressiveness that hands translate, without dirtying musicians' hands in plaster casts as Rodin once did.

PHOTO ESSAY

by
EMILY
SCHERZINGER

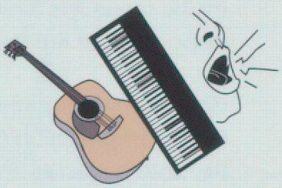
Emily Scherzinger is an English and Philosophy student in her first year. She has broken fourteen bones and enjoys drinking tea while listening to her favourite band, Led Zeppelin.

Steven Suddaby

Age: 18
Year: First
Program of Study: Rotman Commerce
Instrument: Guitar

Suddaby has been playing the guitar since he was 14 or 15. His favourite song to play is "A Certain Romance" by the Arctic Monkeys. He plays guitar on a Fender Telecaster 72 Thinline.

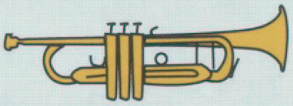
Kaitlin Robertson



Age: 18
Year: Second
Program of Study: Double major in English and Philosophy
Instrument(s): Piano, voice, and guitar

Robertson has been singing and playing piano for ten years, and has been playing guitar for three. Her main focus is vocals. Her favourite song to play on piano and sing is "Ain't Nobody's Business", a jazz standard, by Billie Holiday.

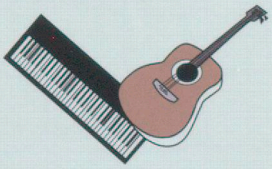
Patricia Riddel



Age: 21
Year: Third
Program of Study: Concurrent teacher education program, majoring in trumpet
Instrument(s): Most of the brass instruments, many string instruments

Riddel has a special love for trumpet – so much that she decided to major in it! She loves to play classical repertoire and every now and then dabble in jazz.

Suzanna Balabuch



Age: 23
Year: Fifth
Program of Study: European Studies major, with a double minor in English and French
Instrument(s): Ukulele, piano

Baladuch has been playing her main instrument, piano, for 16 years, and has been playing ukulele for a year. She enjoys playing classical music on the piano: her favourite composition is "Vocalise" by Rachmaninoff. On ukulele, she enjoys playing pop and indie songs. Her favourite song to play is "Be OK" by Ingrid Michaelson.

Layout: MV

Gold Soundz: The

The Toronto music scene is vast and ever changing. There are so many bands in this large, patchwork quilt of a city. Genres of music range from psychedelic folk to indie pop to classics, such as jazz and rockabilly. The multitude of musical forms is a reflection of the harmonious differences that make up Toronto. With so many people of all ages in the music scene, it's not surprising that it can sometimes be difficult to make a name for oneself. In the underage music scene it is even more difficult, with a lack of venues and promoters willing to host all-ages shows. Fortunately, opportunities are available through independent companies, such as Gold Soundz.

Gold Soundz is a blog and concert promotion company established by U of T student Marc Z. Gold. It grew out of Gold's original blog Grubtunes, as well as the concerts he had been promoting since 2005 under the name Groovetastic. Gold began as an underage musician in an effort to pull together some all ages shows.

Early last year, Gold's thought was as simple as, "Alright, time to stop f*$%g around with this s--t - let's make something bigger happen." Soon enough, he merged his blog and promotion company under the name of Gold Soundz and ever since the company has been putting on events and keeping a regular blog under this name. Demo spoke to Marc Z. Gold to get to know more about his company, his views on the Toronto music scene, and the reason so few promoters are willing to put on all-ages shows:

Demo: What different kinds of events are hosted by Gold Soundz?

Marc Z. Gold: For about one and half years we were doing [a series called] Tiger Bar Groove in Crown and Tiger's underground Tiger Bar. That was a weekly indie rock night, but Tiger Bar had some city issues and asked us to stop. Now I'm running an indie DJ night there called Tiger Bar Bounce and I've started doing bar concerts at Parts and Labour and at The Port.

Then we do two series at the Kapisanan Philippine Center for Arts and Culture in Kensington Market: our all-ages indie series Soundz of the Youth, which we've been running for a couple of months now. The other is Craftstock, which is an indie-pop/folk DIY craft fair type party. We've done three of those so far and they've all been pretty cool. And every now and then we do something bigger, like the Wake For The White Stripes show at the Toronto Underground earlier this year. Hopefully we'll do more big stuff in the future.

Demo: What has your experience been with hosting underage shows? Particularly in terms of the maturity of the crowd and bands, and in contrast to 19+ shows.

MZG: 99% of kids are nice and cool, but I totally understand why people don't want to work with all-ages bands now. First off, it's more expensive to put on an all-ages show in the first place. You have no alcohol revenue so you have to bump up ticket prices to pay off the venue, pay the bands, and have something left for yourself.

SOUNDZ OF TORONTO

Secondly, they drop out of shows way more than older bands do, because of parents, or curfews, or no ride, or they need to smoke weed that night or whatever reason. With every show, I pretty much have to plan for one band to drop out like two weeks before.

Thirdly, the law is whack when it comes to minors and alcohol and they always bring alcohol to shows. The worst thing is when you've got to deal with a drunk kid, because who knows if their parents are going to sue your ass or something if they get hurt somehow. It's kind of scary. But seriously, like I said, that's the 1% of kids that screws things up for their bands, their friends, and for the entire all-ages scene. Most of the kids I work with are smart and cool - they come, they play, they're talented, they're honest, and it's a pleasure to work with them.

Demo: Have you noticed that there is a particular attitude among Toronto promoters/venues toward underage bands?

MZG: Most venues I work with are 19+ bars, so they don't think about them at all. With other promoters, from what I've seen, it's kind of: "Let them play their metal and emo music and I'll make some money." That or they just don't want to work with kids because kids are often even more unreliable than 19+ musicians.

Demo: Do you think there are many opportunities for underage bands? Have you any advice for them?

MZG: No, there aren't all that many opportunities right now for kids to play all-ages shows in Toronto. There are barely any venues left in this city for them and the bars don't want to have anything to do with them because of the law, so it's tough. But youth is inventive, kids will make their own opportunities nonetheless, and so you have kids finding sketchy little places with no security and without any kind of supervision. Some more legit all-age friendly venues wouldn't hurt - maybe arts funding programs could help out with that instead of funding lame recordings by bad bands that no one will buy. Also, you'll probably make more money playing my all-ages shows than you will playing 99% of 19+ shows in this city, so don't think that as soon as you turn 19+ everything will be easy street.

tiger bar bounce

crown and tiger (414 college near bathurst)

indie/dance/electro dj night

free / every saturday

www.goldsoundzblog.com

Written by Evangeline Fitz

Images courtesy of Gold Soundz

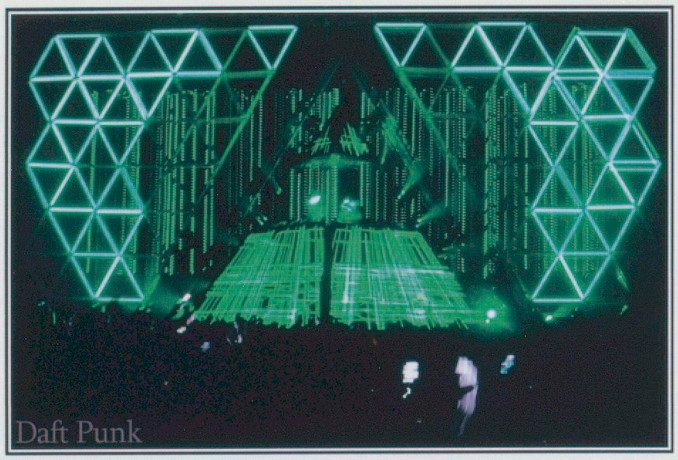
a faith that follows my beat...

Music, religion and family: A student considers her background and beliefs

"This can't be real."

It was like the Daft Punk concert I attended two years ago. The same passionate fans, the heat, sweat and noise building up--the music dominating everything else in the room. Hundreds of people stepped on toes and used each others' shoulders as levers to elevate themselves; just for a glimpse.

Except, people were not here for a band, people were here for God.



Daft Punk

Radhika Mathur is an Arts and Science student, ukulele and violin player, and a person indefinitely obsessed with Daft Punk.

That is the only comparison that comes close to what I witnessed last summer. I traveled 2,579 miles by auto rickshaw, car and on foot, to arrive at the famous Hindu temple "Vrindavan", which celebrates Lord Krishna's childhood. I was completely out of place and disoriented.

"But it's just a statue isn't it?"

I thought to myself as I stood in a faraway corner trying to escape the convulsing madness. There was no organization, no apparent tangible benefits of being there, or opportunities for scenic photographs. Then it hit me. I did not really believe in God.

Watching fanatical pilgrims praying in unison, I felt like I had betrayed my parents. Had I become an outsider in my own family? I began to feel hollow, as if I was missing an essential piece which made me--well--me. I had always thought that our shared religion bound me to my family, to honour our God and follow our common religious practices. Every other Indian family I had come across professed some form of faith. Thus, I diligently performed all the ceremonies and celebrated the festivals, without actually understanding or believing in any of it.

Truthfully, I followed the herd.

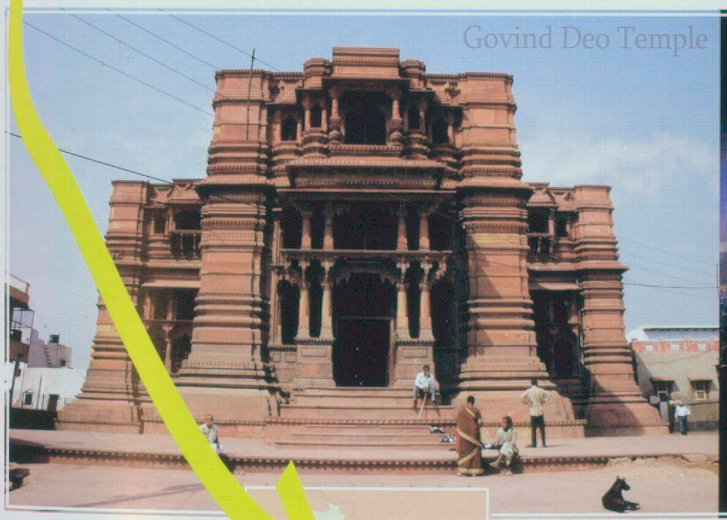
Holi festival

Coldplay

Banke Bhari Temple

This epiphany was disrupted by a frail old man, wearing a white dhoti, one of the many ascetics calling Vrindavan their home. Staff in hand, chanting in Sanskrit, he said in Hindi, "Are you praying for your family?" I quickly replied, "Yes," hoping he would leave me alone. He smiled and walked away. I sighed and looked down at my palms and noticed that they were placed in the praying position. It occurred to me that I always prayed like this before any important event in my life. This was not because of a commitment to God, but because of the values my parents had instilled in me. They did not tell me what to pray for, but to be grateful for the things I have. They had not taught me to touch elders' feet to conform to societal norms, but to show my respect for them. Finally, I realized that I did not celebrate our festivals for the Gods, but to take a moment to recognize the importance of unity, and the family that has always been there for me.

A year later, my hollowness is replaced with a growing faith. Not a faith in God or a religion, but a faith in my values which keep me united with my loved ones. People might be here for Lord Krishna, but I am here for the people I care about most.



Govind Deo Temple

Deadmau5

For me, it is music that I find solace in. A sound for every mood and moment which helps me perceive everything that goes on in my life. Whether it's religion, faith or simply just surviving the first year as an arts and science student in University of Toronto, without a clue what to do next!

Australia's "Festival Rats" Have No Place in Canada

An opinion voiced by Stephanie King

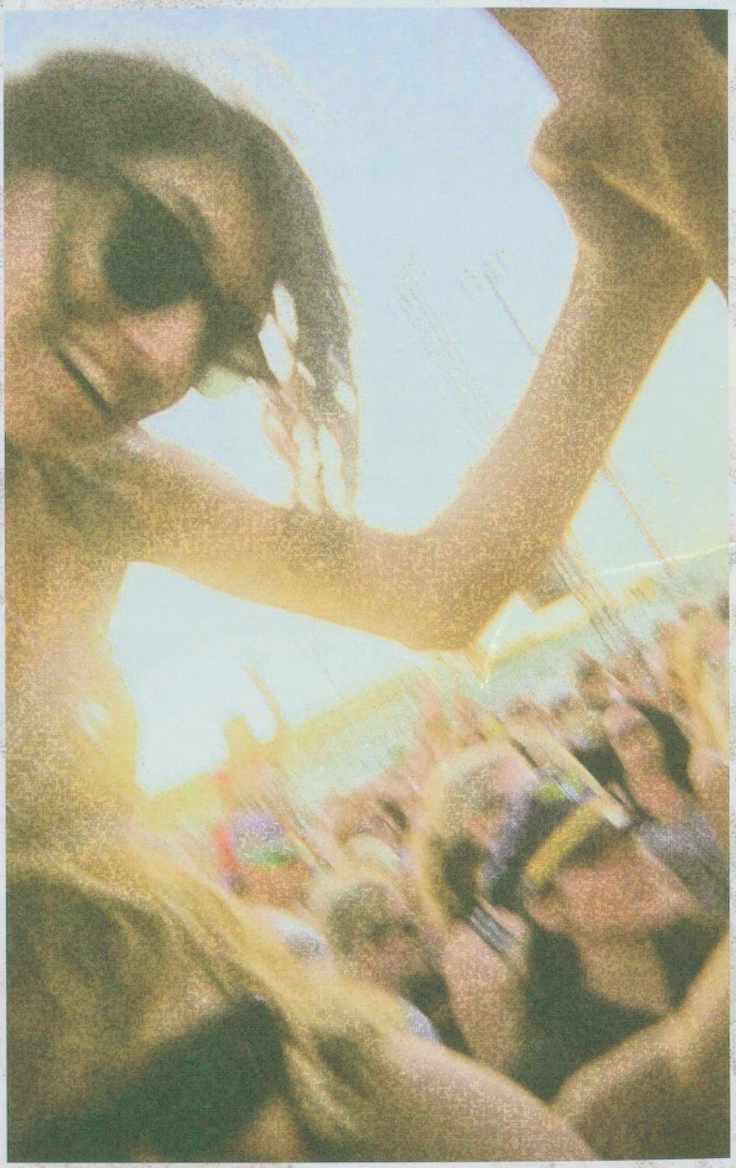
This is the time of year, slowly starting in September and eventually dying down in February, when I am normally forking out more than a hundred and fifty dollars for each festival ticket for the summer music festival season in Australia. As the line-ups are continuously released, I struggle to part with my money, as I know I will have none left by the end; however I do it because I am always extremely excited to see so many of my favourite bands over a period of four months. Off the top of my head, I can think of ten different festivals, and with at least 25 different bands and artists playing at each. It is my definitely my favourite time of the year... aside from the 40 degree heat.
Moving to Toronto after living in the same area of Brisbane, Australia for the past 15 years gives me a great opportunity to be exposed to a different music scene. Ever since, I have started constantly thinking about the different cultures of music appreciation.

Over the years, attending Australian music festivals is such a growing trend that people go now just as a fun day out. In fact, attendees get completely wasted. These festivalgoers are often referred to as "festival rats" by those opposed – a very popular YouTube video titled "Jaydos festival season" perfectly depicts this stereotype. Personally, I would not normally have a problem with this behaviour, however it is definitely disappointing knowing the bands are unappreciated; when I hear people say things like: "Yeah I don't really even know any of the bands there, I just go to get fucked up".

It appears that Australians appreciate many alternative or indie artists and bands playing at these festivals, due to the huge popularity of the festivals; but the fact is that so many people are not there for the music. So many quality Australian bands are unable to become internationally recognised. This constant narrow-minded attitude of people sticking to their genre, be it pop music (or in this case, popular festivals), hardcore, electro, alternative or indie is frustrating because they refuse to be open to music they would not normally listen to.

On the one hand, the general population seems to listen to any music that is popular at the time or consequently attend popular music festivals (again, not for the music, but because it seems to be a popular thing to do). On the other hand, the preference towards other genres of music seems to have formed some sort of competition of whose taste is better, where people judge others for not liking the same music as they do.

I am a fan of alternative music myself, and I personally do not mind a good pop song when I am out dancing and drinking with my friends, but I have noticed indie as a genre creates a very judgmental scene. People that take part in the negative aspects that I see of this scene have a constantly sarcastic attitude towards popular music. When underground bands become slightly mainstream in the popular music culture, many people suddenly do not like the music that artist makes any longer. Those listeners claim that many bands change their music because they get caught up in the music industry and in conforming to popular culture, which I do agree can be the case at times. However, the fact that the indie genre is becoming increasingly popular has a massive affect on the original fans of the artists. These fans claim to have listened to them before they were mainstream and stubbornly oppose the idea of others also liking the music. It is interesting to find that people are not enthusiastic about the idea of more people enjoying the music they listen to. One would normally assume that a band



gaining popularity would be a good thing.

So the festivals, which would normally sell out in a matter of hours, in particular Australia's two most popular festivals, Big Day Out and Splendour in the Grass, are now on sale considerably longer. In my opinion, this is due to the fact that many people

do not want to be grouped with the popular music culture, and do in fact not like it anymore because it is now popular. So you could ask now: has the choice against mainstream become mainstream in itself?

Having explored Toronto for the past two and a half months, I have discovered the city's claim of an appealing art scene definitely rings true. Within my first few weeks living on Canadian soil, I was told to pick up a copy of Now Magazine. When I came to the double page spread of all the amazing bands playing around the city, I knew I was in the right place. The abundance of free performances, such as The Drums at Sonic Boom, and the Naked and Famous and Mumford and Sons playing down at Sugar Beach for The Edge, is amazing. I have almost never come across these sorts of shows at home. I believe the reason for the popularity of those kinds of shows is because a larger population here appreciates alternative and indie music. In particular, I find that the attitude towards music appears to be very flexible, which is the complete opposite of what I am used to. I have come across several Canadians who may have a particular genre that they stick to, but with many others, there is no hostility apparent.

Instead of the support it seems new acts receive in Toronto, back home there is not a positive attitude towards the musical talent emerging, which is clearly crucial for them to become known internationally. So many people enjoy Canadian indie music, whereas in Brisbane, there seems to be a definitive line between music subcultures, and only a small population truly appreciating indie music as a whole. There are many Canadian Bands known on Australian turf such as Tegan and Sara, Arcade Fire, Crystal Castles, Feist and Ladyhawke, to name a few, compared to the seemingly small amount of Australian bands known here. This idea of Australia being "Down Under" is really starting to take its toll on my mind after having the fresh perspective from living in a different country.

So I should make it clear that I am not in any way degrading the Australian musical talent, I am simply stating the different societal positions. There are so many amazing Australian bands, such as Hungry Kids of Hungary, Cloud Control, Tame Impala, Alpine, Emma Louise, Children Collide, Yves Klein Blue, Architecture in Helsinki and many more, who have not yet been recognised due to a lack of public involvement. However, in hope of a turn around, Australian radio station Triple J, which particularly plays Australian hip-hop and alternative music, has become increasingly popular over the past couple of years. A new station was recently established, Triple J Unearthed, specifically for all unsigned Australian bands or artists to expose their music to potential labels and the public.

In more recent times Australia has offered quality bands receiving acclaim on an international level (although, unfortunately, not necessarily in Canada) including Jet, Empire of the Sun, The Cat Empire, LCD Soundsystem and Little Red. But the fact is, there are so many quality alternative bands in Australia that are just not receiving any international attention. Therefore, the Australian music scene cannot be represented as well as it should be. Torontonians should definitely be proud of their music scene, and be glad they do not have any "festival rats" ruining the appreciation of music.

Stephanie King is a third year student on exchange from Australia, studying Criminology and Criminal Justice. She feels that wearing her birthday cake hat while she cleans her room doesn't make it seem so bad.

Braids

A Review by Elena Gritzan

I have always been told that Braids are a band that you have to see live to fully understand. The Montreal quartet's debut album, Native Speaker, flows through seven playful, atmospheric songs, topped by the otherworldly voice of lead singer Raphaelle Standel-Preston. It was shortlisted for the 2011 Polaris Music Prize, cementing its critical acclaim. Nonetheless, I have to agree that seeing this group of best friends perform live is the only way to fully understand their musical maturity and intensity.

On October 14, Braids brought their live show for a sold-out gig to the Horseshoe Tavern. The most striking part of their sound is the way they combine their voices and use them more like instruments; and not just singer Standel-Preston, but all members. Wordless vocal harmonies add to the delicately orchestrated instrumental layers. As they play, the breaks between songs blur, giving the impression of a one hour-long song, full of emotional peaks and haunting, calm moments.

Braids may be one of the most exciting bands in Canada at the moment, but they are endearingly humble about their success. At the Polaris Prize gala, Standel-Preston gave a wide-eyed thank you, sharing that "[they] almost dropped to the floor when [they] found out [they] were short-listed". At the Horseshoe, drummer Austin Tufts and guitarist/bassist Taylor Smith mixed with the crowd to enjoy the theatrics of opening band Born Gold. After their own set, Raphaelle thanked the audience profusely for coming, stating that they have been playing in Toronto for a long time.

The night ended with Native Speaker, the title track from their album, intended to send us off to sleep. Or to do…other things as – keyboardist Katie Lee pointed out - it was a Friday night. For me at least, all I could do afterwards was listen to Native Speaker on repeat.

U of T's Got Talent!

A Review of U of T Idol by Justin Lee

Many of us may have grown up watching American and Canadian Idol, but never dreamed of having a chance to perform in our very own Idol competition. Well, here is your chance: If you have a voice and you can sing, you should certainly try out for the U of T Idol. Should you go on to the finals, you could perform in front of an audience composed of hundreds. You would be accompanied by a professional band, and the stage would be all yours. On October 13th, the first round of U of T Idol took place in the Arbor Room at Hart House. This is the first Idol competition at U of T, and it is open to any enthusiastic singer who is a student here, regardless of age or major.

Four contestants began the first round–Alyssa Curto, Cliff Li, Caroline Mok and Chris Li. These talented singers were accompanied by The Woodshed Orchestra, a fun and groovy five-piece band from Toronto. Alyssa Curto opened with a cover of Adele's "Someone Like You", a popular but challenging piece that even troubles Adele herself in her live performances. The judges were worried before her performance, wondering if she would do justice to the difficult song. But Curto blew everyone away. Full of fiery passion and emotion, she rocked the house with her rich, powerful voice.

Next up was Cliff Li, who brought along his acoustic guitar. His selection was Bruno Mars' "Talking to the Moon." He really got into it: he was like a rock star on stage. He sang with great rhythm and gave an incredibly enthusiastic performance.

Caroline Mok followed up with a performance of "Your Song" by Elton John. Jazzy and moody, Mok gave a charming performance with her soft voice. She made the song her own, giving off a bluesy and smoky feel, rather than the heavy, passionate original version.

The closing act was Chris Li, who sang "Angel" by Sarah McLachlan. Chris Li has a beautiful high-pitched voice, like a soprano singer. He was confident and he had strong stage presence. His performance was full of power and the judges were amazed by his high voice.

After the performances, the audience members were given ballots to decide on the best performance of the night. The winner of the first round was Alyssa Curto. She will be moving on to the semi-finals of U of T Idols, which will take place in April 2012. In the rounds in the next few months, the rest of the semi-finalists will be selected. U of T Idol provides a great opportunity for student singers, regardless of experience, to get a chance to really show what they got and grasp the chance to perform like an idol with a live band.

Check the Hart House website for more details on upcoming rounds and live footage.

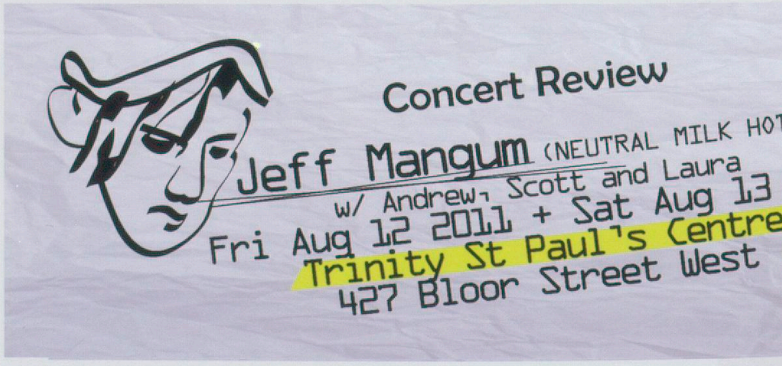
Justin Lee is a first year in English. He plays classical guitar and double bass. His favorite band is the Arctic Monkeys.

We give our love to the music that fits into the narrative of our lives. As a ninth grader, lost in that particularly charmless way many 15 year olds are, I worked as a slave labourer for Wonderland. The daily three-hour round trip commute took me through a dreary expanse of midtown-turned-suburbia, the riders around me dead-eyed and merging with the scenery. I do not know how I would have made it through that job if I did not have Neutral Milk Hotel (introduced to me by a certain "mainstream indie" music website) playing on repeat in the hazy summer mornings and idle summer nights that surrounded my working day.

What drew me to Neutral Milk Hotel initially was its sound – their brass was celebratory, their instrumentation carnivalesque, their melodies immediate. But even in my adolescence, I was a student more of language than of sound. Jeff Mangum, the band's vocalist and lyricist, gave the band their limitless appeal. My first encounter with In the Aeroplane Over the Sea revealed a Mangum who declared outright: "I love you, Jesus Christ!"; who filled his surrealist reveries with images of holy rattlesnakes and semen-stained mountaintops; whose reference to two-headed boys mirrored the circus-punk of the music. Upon my second listening, I noticed that Mangum's spirituality became enmeshed with a fear – or, perhaps, an eagerness to express discomfort – toward lust and sexuality. Oblique references to sex, most pronounced in lines such as: "placing fingers through the notches in your spine", resonated with me. I was only beginning to discover my own body, and the flesh of others remained a darkened stain in the realm of my imagination. To be enthralled by this music, and the wound it created in me between a private conception of God and a public conception of love, gave my curious existence a direction.

In the Aeroplane Over the Sea is famously a concept album detailing Mangum's imaginary relationship to Anne Frank, a relationship deeply touched by the horrors of the Holocaust and lucidity of Frank's prose. To me, Mangum's declaration that she "was the only girl [he had] ever loved" signifies his homosexuality. Surely, said my warped logic, he must then have loved many more boys? His lyrics, at once both esoteric and universal, were a huge part of his rise to indie stardom. But the man who "would shoot all the superheroes from your skies" deflected his fame and superstar status from the start and went into a reclusive ten-year period where he interacted very little with the musical community and did not tour at all.

You could almost hear a collective exclamation of "Holy fuck!" from the Neutral Milk Hotel fan-base when Mangum decided to tour again. In the ten-plus years since Aeroplane's release, Neutral Milk Hotel has impacted Arcade Fire, Brand New, and the Dresden Dolls (among many others) – all of whom have matched the band's success, but, in my opinion, never its purity.


Concert Review
Jeff Mangum (NEUTRAL MILK HO
w/ Andrew, Scott and Laura
Fri Aug 12 2011 + Sat Aug 13
Trinity St Paul's Centre
427 Bloor Street West

To have the opportunity to see Jeff Mangum for two nights in a row (in the acoustically-unmatched Trinity-St. Paul's Church, no less) was, for me, a way to revisit the intensity of my first encounter with the band and the raw, possessed sincerity of its undeniable lead singer.

Trinity-St. Paul's was sweltering both nights of Mangum's performance. During the hour-long opening set, the heat was quite apparent. But as soon as Mangum came onstage, long-limbed and smiling from cheek to cheek, the heat seemed to dissolve. It became part, rather than outside of, the experience. And if his set sent me into ecstasy the first night, the repeat viewing was transcendent, veering close to ego-death: a total loss of awareness of the self. I will always share an affinity with the quality of Mangum's music. It documents a love that stretches to the point near the end of the world, that decries flesh as feeble and minds as contingent; it is a spiritual music which, on those two nights, made all thoughts of church and religion banal beyond belief to me.

As a romantic idealist growing up in a family and culture of rational atheism, I was unfamiliar with any metaphysical conviction that lay outside the bounds of churchly institution. The music of Neutral Milk Hotel kindled my fascination with the existential experience many years ago ("How strange it is to be anything at all!") and, on those two nights, it was that music that gave me release from doing nothing more than living and being.

The performance raised other interesting questions about dichotomies, most notably between the audience and the musician: When Mangum asked for all of us to "fuckin sing" and we instead responded with reverent silence, did he blur the line at all? The dichotomy between the fan and the hero: did Mangum take up this tour to "demythologize" himself, to take himself down from the pedestal he had been placed on in the history of indie rock? Mangum's music is the type that resists all attempts to be intellectualized. It is the kind that plunges in and cannot be extricated; it defies heart-on-sleeve and instead fulfills a more grandiose, heart-in-chest ambition. It is a music which has only grown within me since its inception in my consciousness five years ago, and it brings me a joy which never fails to send tremors down the notches of my spine.

Written by Fan Wu

Hyacca

Merpeoples

Gems of the Orient

Next Music from Tokyo Showcase at the Velvet Underground

A Review by Ying Yu

Next Music From Tokyo is a showcase that features many Japanese indie bands and gives Canadian audiences a taste of the, supposedly, "most exciting music scene in the world". Touring Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver this past October--two scheduled nights in both Toronto and Montreal are telling of the concept's success.

Attending the second TO instalment at the Velvet Underground on October 16th, I got an idea what a mermaid sounds like when the vocalist of Merpeoples Yukako Ohno, who prefers to go by the name Charlotte, sang with a distinct and otherworldly voice at the end of a pop-rock song, wearing a neon dress wrapped with light bulbs. At first, the band seemed like any other cute Asian girl group, but their songs clearly showed otherwise. Their set consisted of high-pitched vocals, combined with upbeat melodies and rapid harmonies with a hint of malice. Merpeoples' performance included many unexpected moments, such as their keyboardist's energetic movements as she pounded out her solo performance towards the end of a song. As the opening act, this was a promising start to a night that burst with energy.

Noise rockers Hyacca went on next, with screechy chords accompanied by screaming vocals from a female and male vocalist. At first, the song sounded like heavy metal, but then the speakers filled the room with an ambient drone reminiscent of dream rock and shoegaze. It was a mesmerizing moment that made many stand still. The next thing I knew, the band launched into another set of their dissonant chords. At this moment, a tall figure pushed me away with a violent shove. I turned to find Steve Tanaka, the organizer of the concert, who was joining others in flinging his head and body wildly to the music. Later into the set, the female vocalist ran to the front of the stage, encouraging a group to join her and dance alongside the band. Of course the group jumped at the chance. Their frantic body movements complimented the melody, making them the performance's highlight. I left exhilarated, excitedly anticipating the bands Tanaka will invite to the event next year.

Super Rich!

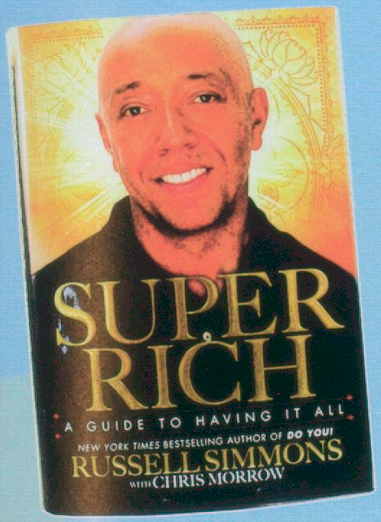
A Book Review by Monica Chao

It's Monday morning. You have a hard time waking up. You're late for ____. You get yelled at by ____. You don't get along with your ____. You come home, tired, and your ____ nags at you. You go to bed and everything repeats for the rest of the week. Fret not. Here comes Russell Simmons with his words of enlightenment.

In his book, Super Rich: A Guide to Having It All, Simmons shares his secrets on becoming super rich. From the title, I was expecting to learn some useful investment tips that will let me ride the escalator to wealth and skip the outlined scenario. However, Simmons simply preaches the ancient values that we overlook in our busy, busy lives: be positive, be happy, and help others. Perhaps to Simmons, after becoming a successful entrepreneur and owning a lot of material wealth, to be truly happy is not about swimming in his stacks of cash and the dozen cars worth millions of dollars parked nicely in his driveway. He provides examples and insight from his road to success like putting the successes and happiness of others before your own. In a didactic tone, he urges "no matter who you are or what your circumstances are, you [should] have faith that you can take control of your consciousness…transform your relationship with yourself and the world for the better. [Then] you will be super rich."

This is an inspiring book that is suitable for everyone, be it students or working professionals. Though it is overly optimistic, sometimes we just need a little encouragement to get us going on our monotonous routines. My main reservation towards the book is that it falls under the business section: if you want actual business strategies, you should look elsewhere.

Super Rich: A Guide to Having It All
By Russell Simmons with Chris Morrow
Gotham Books
Hardcover, 197 pages



Photography by Q Chen

The Narrative of Dissolution:
A Lyrical Analysis of Two Break-up Songs

Fan Wu

Wussy – "Airborne"

The opening track to Wussy's first record is a furious barn-romper which charts the periods immediately before and during a break-up. The ex-lovers split their mic time exactly 50/50, each singing one and a half verses — a stringently "fair" gesture which acts as a stark contrast to the venom in the lyrics. The venom, though delivered with a spitfire rage in this song, reveals itself to be entwined with self-loathing upon closer inspection. The chorus — "You did not even send me airborne anyway/ Why in the world I hung around it's hard to say" — re-routes the blame from the beloved in the first line to the self in the second. The accusatory finger digs even deeper in the verses: the man is at the telephone: "working on a backbone/ and chiseling a tombstone" in the first verse while the woman echoes those insecurities in the final verse: "I didn't mean to bore you/ Or grind it in so deep." This is a break-up which is painful but not because of its suddenness; one is left feeling most of all that the two regret the time they wasted and the time they took out of each other's lives living that relation of incompatibility.

Future Islands – "Long Flight"

In "Long Flight", on the other hand, the space of Samuel T. Herring's vocals are never shared, his choruses never harmonized. Here, the action of the betrayal is clear; the burden of guilt is placed upon the beloved who was found at home "with another man" after Herring returned from the titular "long flight". Where the cause for the relationship's collapse is kept vague in "Airborne", "Long Flight" chooses instead to reveal the cause — an episode of 'cheating' — but leaves the reasons why open to interpretation. The refrain heard throughout the song is Herring's accusation: "just cause you needed a hand". While the euphemism here is obvious, Herring's vocal delivery suggest a shortcoming that is entirely his own. He recounts a direct encounter with his beloved: "And so I whispered into your ear/ 'Who are you thinking about?'/ It couldn't be me". But the song leaves no space for the woman's response. For all the listener knows, Herring could be groping for a closure entirely enclosed within his imagination.

Herring's character in "Long Flight" suffers for keeping his love alive--when he screams: "This is the way it all falls/ This is how I feel/ This is what I need/ You, by me — right here — by me/ Right now", he screams into a void whose silence he knows. There is no other voice here to console him. He is removed from the duet and faced with a lover who has moved on, violently and selfishly, stranding him in this interplay of past ecstasies and present desperation.

Interested in Getting Involved?
We are looking for new members!
Being a music student is not required!
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Looking forward to seeing you!

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